



Hamilton County Emergency Management

Thunderstorm Safety

March 22, 2018

Hamilton County Emergency Management continues this week's series of severe weather preparedness by focusing on thunderstorm safety. In Indiana, more homes are damaged annually by severe thunderstorms rather than tornadoes. In some cases, severe thunderstorms can produce straight-line winds resulting in significant destruction.

Know the difference between a Watch and a Warning. A Severe Thunderstorm Watch means conditions are favorable for severe thunderstorms to develop, but there is not an imminent threat. A Severe Thunderstorm Warning means a severe thunderstorm has been detected and an imminent threat to life and property has developed.

Severe Thunderstorm Watch - issued when conditions are favorable for the development of severe thunderstorms, people located in and around the watch area should keep an eye to the sky and listen to their NOAA weather radio all hazards or tune to local broadcast media for further weather information. The watch is intended to give you time to prepare, time to review safety rules.

Severe Thunderstorm Warning - issued when a severe thunderstorm has been detected by National Weather Service Doppler radar or a reliable report has been received. A warning is usually issued for portions of one or two counties, for an hour or less. If the warning includes your neighborhood or workplace, you should take immediate action to protect your life and the lives of others. Severe thunderstorms can produce large hail and damaging winds. Tornadoes can, and occasionally do, accompany severe thunderstorms. Treat this warning the same as you would a tornado warning by taking the proper safety precautions.

- The best defense against thunderstorms is to stay inside a sturdy building or shelter that can protect you from deadly lightning, large hail, damaging winds, flooding rain, and tornadoes. Fortunately, thunderstorms typically do not last very long and will most often pass by your location in less than one hour.
- Once in a shelter, stay away from windows and avoid electrical equipment and plumbing. Remember to bring pets inside. If there is time, secure loose objects outside as these objects often become dangerous flying debris in high winds.
- Postpone outdoor activities until the storms have passed.
- If caught outside, take shelter in a sturdy enclosed building or hard top automobile immediately. Avoid open spaces, isolated objects, high ground, and metallic objects.
- Get out of boats and away from bodies of water. Remember, if you can hear thunder, you are close enough to the storm to be struck by lightning.

If a tornado is spotted, act quickly and move to the lowest level basement of your shelter, putting as many walls between yourself and the outside as possible.

Source: National Weather Service

It is important to have a plan of action in place before threatening weather develops. Make sure you and your family know what to do when severe weather is approaching. Identify the best possible place to seek shelter. Basements are great for this, but if you are in a home without a basement, you should find a room that is as close to the center of your home with as many walls between you and the outside and on the lowest level. Bathrooms or closets are usually a good choice and make sure everyone knows



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where to go. Sometimes, during a severe weather event, it can be very loud, and the loss of power will likely occur. It is best to sit down with younger children and explain to them, before the event, what could happen. Include your pets to ensure sure they are safe and protected.

Hamilton County Emergency Management encourages the public, businesses, and schools to prepare now for severe weather. Additional resources are available on Emergency Management's website at www.hamiltoncounty.in.gov/em or www.ready.gov site.